



PREPARING YOUR NEW ENTRANT CHILD FOR SCHOOL

What Can Parents Do To
Help Their Child?

INTRODUCTION

At Greenmeadows School we are often asked by parents of four year olds about the types of learning opportunities they could involve their child in to get them ready to start school.

As a result of these questions we have produced this booklet to give a guide and suggestions of the types of experiences you can offer your child as they approach their fifth birthday. The types of learning experiences included can also be of use for students who have started school and are progressing through the first few months of formal schooling, so need not be confined to preschoolers.

Experience in teaching junior students and countless studies show that the better prepared for school a child is, the quicker their progress tends to be. However, it needs to be emphasized that the learning outlined in this booklet should not create any stress or anxiety for parents or the child. Sometimes a child is simply not ready to start certain tasks. As we all grow physically at different rates, it is similar with learning – we are all individuals and learning does not happen at the same rate for all. If providing learning experiences for your child in any of these areas turns into a negative experience for either you or child – STOP and relax. Learning needs to be fun, especially in a home situation.

Included in this booklet is a summary sheet of the types of child capabilities, and in the following pages these statements are explained in more detail with examples.

Enjoy the opportunity to learn with your child. Time spent with them is crucial and if you are able to manage this, this is the best thing you can give them.

Mark Johnson

Principal - Greenmeadows School

PARENT GUIDE SUMMARY FOR SCHOOL ENTRANT SKILLS

The following are behaviours to develop in your child as they start to enter school:

Reading

1. Will calmly sit and listen to a story being read to them each day
2. Know we read from the front to the back of a book, and from left to right on the page
3. Recognise the letters of the alphabet
4. Know the sounds for several letters (ideally as many as possible: ten is a great start)
5. Can retell a story using pictures from a book
6. Can suggest a rhyming word to complete a pattern e.g. "Jack and Jill went up the hill ..."
7. Able to list/recount six or more nursery rhymes

Writing

1. Can hold a writing tool securely approximating the correct grip
2. Can write an approximation of their name with 5 letters correct – even better if this is in lower case letters!
3. Draw pictures about their experiences
4. Attempts to form letters and shapes to convey a message
5. Attempts to read back their writing

Oral

1. Speaks in a sentence
2. Recounts a personal experience
3. Listens and responds to two-part instructions
4. Able to answer a question with a relevant sentence
5. Able to ask for help when needed

Maths

1. Say the numbers from 1 to 10 in the correct order
2. Make sets to 5 using 1-to-1 matching
3. Recognise numerals to 10
4. Knows basic colours and shapes. Can sort objects by colour, shape or size
5. Can use positional words correctly e.g. 'above', 'below', 'beside', 'under', 'in front', 'behind', 'forwards', 'backwards', 'up' and 'down'

READING SKILLS

To prepare your child for the start of school the following are suggestions of skills your child could be able to complete:

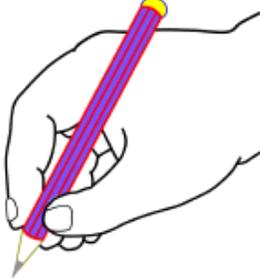
Key characteristics at school entry level

Behaviour	Examples
1. Will calmly sit and listen to a story being read to them each day	At home child will ask for books to be read to them. Child is accustomed to bed time stories. Child knows that books are entertaining and fun.
2. Know we read from the front to the back of a book, and from left to right on the page	Child can hold a book the right way when it is passed to them. Child can show you where the story starts. Child knows the difference between words/letters and pictures.
3. Recognise the letters of the alphabet	Child can name many letters of the alphabet – lower case first, then capitals later. Child can read their own name.
4. Know the sounds for several letters (ideally as many as possible: ten is a great start).	Child can understand that letters have names and sounds. Child can make sounds for letters (ideally about 10 letters) Common consonants such as 's', 'w', 'b', 't', 'p', etc. It is easiest to start with letters in their name.
5. Can retell a story using pictures from a book	After being read a picture book, the child can retell it going through the pages using the illustrations as prompts. Students can draw a picture of a personal experience and explain it to someone.
6. Can suggest a rhyming word to complete a pattern e.g. "Jack and Jill went up the hill ..."	'Jack and Jill went up the _____" '1, 2, 3, 4, 5: once I caught a fish _____"
7. Able to list/recount six or more nursery rhymes	How about these for starters: 'Humpty Dumpty' 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star' 'Little Miss Muffit' 'Little Jack Horner' 'There was an old lady who lived in a shoe' Rock-a-bye baby'

WRITING SKILLS

To prepare your child for the start of school the following are suggestions of skills your child could be able to complete:

Key characteristics at school entry level

Behaviour	Examples
1. Can hold a writing tool securely approximating the correct grip	 <p>(or the left handed equivalent)</p>
2. Can write an approximation of their name with 5 letters correct – even better if this is in lower case letters	Correct means that the letters are clearly intended to be the right letters. Letters may be backwards (e.g. ‘n’ may have the stick on the wrong side)
3. Draw pictures about their experiences	 <p>‘A Fish’</p>
4. Attempts to form letters and shapes to convey a message	Sometimes referred to as ‘magic writing’, this is where students play at writing and either read what they have ‘written’ or may ask an adult to read what they have done. Children know that the purpose of writing is to convey information to an audience.
5. Attempts to read back their writing	Children make approximations in their writing of words often identifying initial sounds only. They know the story by memory and will use the initial letter sounds to help recall the meaning of their story.

ORAL LANGUAGE SKILLS

To prepare your child for the start of school the following are suggestions of skills your child could be able to complete:

Key characteristics at school entry level

Behaviour	Examples
1. Speaks in a sentence	Child gives whole sentence answers to open questions (e.g. "What did you have for dinner last night?") rather than rely on verbs and nouns in isolation. e.g. "Where are you going now?" Appropriate – "I am going home." Inappropriate – "Me home."
2. Recounts a personal experience	Students can tell about a significant recent event like their birthday including specific details. Can explain who lives in their house using appropriate nouns.
3. Listens and responds to two-part instructions	Will successfully complete directions like: "Go to the toilet, <u>then</u> wash your hands." "Finish your dinner, <u>then</u> put the plate on the bench."
4. Able to answer a question with a relevant sentence	When students don't know how to answer a question they say something completely unrelated: e.g. Q. "What is your name?" A. "Dog running."
5. Able to ask for help when needed	Students at school need to be able to clearly express their needs. Using the toilet; or being unsure of what to do with a set task, are two instances where students need confidence to approach their teacher to ask for help.

MATHEMATICS SKILLS

To prepare your child for the start of school the following are suggestions of skills your child could be able to complete:

Key characteristics at school entry level

Behaviour	Examples
1. Say the numbers from 1 to 10 in the correct order	This does not necessarily mean counting ten things. Counting is a more complex task than having the numbers 1 to 10 learned by rote.
2. Make sets to 5 using 1-to-1 matching	This means the child can use counters or beans (buttons, toys, fruit, biscuits and other everyday life objects) to make a set. e.g. "Can you make me a set (group) of four things?" "Can you get a biscuit for us to eat?" "How many did you get?" The child would count out four counters/objects and then show the adult the group.
3. Recognise numerals to 10	When shown cards with '1' through to '5' written on them – out of sequence – the child can successfully identify all of them.
4. Knows basic colours and shapes. Can sort objects by colour, shape or size	Child knows most of the below: Shapes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - square - triangle - rectangle/oblong - circle - oval Colours: red, blue, green, orange, yellow, pink, white, black
5. Can use positional and comparative words correctly	Positional words: 'above', 'below', 'beside', 'under', 'in front', 'behind', 'forwards', backwards', 'up' and 'down' Comparative words: 'bigger than', 'smaller than', 'taller than' 'heavier', lighter', 'older'

WHAT OTHER THINGS ARE HELPFUL FOR THE START OF SCHOOL?

Before your child starts school it is helpful if they can:

- do up their shoes
- go to the toilet and wash their hands
- blow their nose
- recognise when they are thirsty and get a drink of water
- ask for things they need

You can help get your child ready for the school environment by encouraging them to:

- sit on a chair at a table for short periods of time to complete an activity
- ask for things they need
- be comfortable being away from you
- know how to take turns, or is able to wait for things

What does the teacher want to know about your child?

- After-school plans and who picks them up when you are not able to
- If your child has any special health needs and what to do
- What your child likes to do, what they are good at and what makes them happy
- You could bring their Early Childhood Portfolio of learning experiences for your child to share with their teacher.

We wish you and your family all the best for your child's preparation for their first day, and once enrolled, the first few weeks of settling into the school environment. It can be an exciting time, as well as one of nerves and some anxiety (in most cases this is the parent). Feel free to talk to teachers at the school – we aim to make the transition as smooth as possible.